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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 USNATO 4741

E.O. 11652: GDS, 12-31-79

TAGS: PFOR, NATO

SUBJECT: POLADS PAPER ON SOVIET INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF PAPER DEVELOPED BY INTERNATIONAL STAFF ON SOVIET INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS REFLECTING DISCUSSION IN POLITICAL COMMITTEE WHICH WAS IN TURN BASED ON SUBSTANTIAL U.S. INPUT. FIRST SEVEN PARAGRAPHS OF TEXT BELOW ARE INFORMAL MISSION TRANSLATION OF IS PAPER. IS PAPER WILL BE ON AGENDA OF OCTOBER 8 POLADS MEETING, AT WHICH TIME WE WOULD WELCOME ANY PRELIMINARY COMMENTS BY DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY MOSCOW. WE ASSUME THAT PAPER WILL REMAIN ON COMMITTEE'S AGENDA FOR AT LEAST ONE MORE MEETING WHICH WOULD ALLOW ADDITIONAL TIME FOR COMMENTS, SHOULD THIS BE NEEDED.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

SOVIET INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

I. REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS

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1. FOR SEVERAL YEARS, THE SOVIET POLITICAL POLICE HAVE SOUGHT, WITH CONTINUITY AND A CERTAIN DISCRETION, TO ELIMINATE ALL EVIDENCES OF OPPOSITION AMONG INTELLECTUALS TO THE REGIME. DURING RECENT WEEKS, THIS EFFORT HAS TAKEN ON A GREATER

MAGNITUDE AND A SERIES OF RELATED EVENTS HAS PUT THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE DISSIDENTS IN THE CENTER OF INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION.

2. THIS HARDENING REGARDING DISSIDENTS WAS INDICATED INITIALLY BY THE SENTENCING OF AMALRIK TO THREE YEARS OF DETENTION IN A STRICT REGIME LABOR CAMP ON THE EVE OF HIS LIBERATION. THEN THERE WAS THE REVOCATION OF SOVIET CITIZENSHIP OF THE BIOLOGIST JAURES MEDVEDEV, THE EXILE OF SINYAVSKI, THE MANIFESTATIONS OF ANTI-SEMITISM DURING THE UNIVERSITY OLYMPICS IN MOSCOW AND THE SIMULTANEOUS CONTINUATION OF ARRESTS AND COMMITMENT TO PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS. IN THIS CONTEXT, OBSERVERS WERE ASTONISHED BY THE TOLERANCE WHICH THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES SHOWED TOWARD THE DECLARATIONS COMMUNICATED TO THE WESTERN PRESS BY SOLZHENITSYN AND SAKHAROV, DENOUNCING THE REPRESSION OF THOUGHT IN THE USSR AND WARNING WESTERN OPINION AGAINST A POLICY OF DETENTE WHICH, WITHOUT A DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE SOVIET REGIME, WOULD REMAIN AN ILLUSION.

3. A NEW ELEMENT EMERGED WITH THE CAMPAIGN OF DENIGRATION AGAINST SOLZHENITSYN AND SAKHAROV AS WELL AS THE WARNINGS AND THREATS TO WHICH THEY WERE SUBJECTED, AND THE EXCEPTIONAL PUBLICITY GIVEN TO THE LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST YAKIR AND KRASSIN, WHO WERE CHARGED WITH COOPERATION WITH THE NTS, AN ORGANIZATION SEEKING TO OVERTHROW THE CURRENT REGIME IN THE USSR. THIS CASE ACTUALLY RELATES TO THE "CHRONICAL OF CURRENT EVENTS," A TYPED MANUSCRIPT CIRCULATING UNDERGROUND WHICH LAST APPEARED IN NOVEMBER 1972.

4. THE CAMPAIGN ORCHESTRATED AGAINST SAKHAROV ENDED AS SUDDENLY AS IT BEGAN, AND ON SEPTEMBER 8 SAKHAROV HELD A SECOND PRESS CONFERENCE AT HIS MOSCOW APARTMENT FOR A GROUP OF FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS DURING WHICH HE SOUGHT TO REPLY TO THE ATTACKS AGAINST HIM. AT THE SAME TIME, AND EQUALLY UNEXPECTED, THE JAMMING OF BROADCASTS BY VOA, BBC AND DEUTSCHE WELLE WAS STOPPED FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1968.
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5. SINCE THE TIME OF KHRUSHCHEV, THERE HAD NOT BEEN SO MUCH ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEM OF THE DISSIDENTS, WHOM THE REGIME MAINTAINED WERE ONLY ISOLATED INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT POPULAR SUPPORT. IN SUPPORT OF RUMORS RELATING TO DISAGREEMENTS WITHIN THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP, IT CAN BE RECALLED THAT IN HIS AUGUST 15 SPEECH AT ALMA-ATA, BREZHNEV USED A NEW TONE IN AFFIRMING HIS CONVICTION THAT "THE EXTENSION OF CONTRACTS, THE EXCHANGE OF CULTURAL VALUES, OF INFORMATION, THE DEVELOPMENT OF TIES BETWEEN SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS WHICH ARE NATURAL IN A CLIMATE OF DETENTE, WILL BE USEFUL FOR THE DIFFUSION OF THE TRUTH ABOUT SOCIALISM AND FOR WINNING NEW SUPPORTERS FOR THE IDEAS OF SCIENTIFIC COMMUNISM."

6. IT IS ALSO APPROPRIATE TO MENTION THE LETTER WHICH BREZHNEV SENT TO PRAVDA ON SEPTEMBER 7 IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED HIS THANKS FOR THE MESSAGES OF SUPPORT WHICH HE HAD RECEIVED FROM THE POPULATION FOR HIS POLICY OF DETENTE. AT THE SAME TIME, WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THE FACT THAT THE CHINESE EMBASSY IN MOSCOW HAS ACTIVELY ENCOURAGED RUMORS ACCORDING TO WHICH BREZHNEV WAS IN A DIFFICULT POSITION AND THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE DISSIDENTS HAD BEEN INITIATED BY HIS OPPONENTS.

7. IN ANY CASE, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE CURRENT TRUCE COULD BE SUSPENDED AT ANY MOMENT.

II. ASSESSMENT

8. THE DEVELOPMENTS DESCRIBED ABOVE HAVE HIGHLIGHTED THE DIFFICULTY FACED BY THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP IN RECONCILING THEIR STIFLING OF DISSENT WITH THEIR ESPOUSAL OF A POLICY OF DETENTE INCORPORATING AGREEMENT TO DISCUSS AT THE CSCE TOPICS MUCH AS THE FREER EXCHANGE OF PEOPLE AND IDEAS.

9. THE TRIAL AND "CONFESSIONS" OF YAKIR AND KRASSIN AND THE PRESSURES ON SAKHAROV, SOLZHENITSYN AND OTHERS PROVIDE EVIDENCE OF THE EXISTENCE AND INFLUENCE OF HARD-LINERS IN THE SOVIET HIERARCHY WHO BELIEVE IN CONTINUING TO STIFLE DISSENT TENACIOUSLY. WHILE BREZHNEV HIMSELF MAY HAVE BEEN HESITANT TO ENDORSE SUCH MOVES, IT SEEMS IMPROBABLE THAT THEY COULD HAVE BEEN PUT IN TRAIN WITHOUT AT LEAST HIS RELUCTANT ACQUI-CONFIDENTIAL

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ESCENCE. SUCH PRESSURES MAY WELL HAVE BEEN INTENDED BY THOSE RESPONSIBLE TO DISCOURAGE ANY WISHFUL THINKING AMONG THE INTELLIGENTSIA - AND INDEED IN THE WEST - THAT AN ERA OF SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN THE SOVIET UNION IS AT HAND. IT MAY INDEED BE ASSUMED THAT THE HARD-LINERS PERCEIVE INCREASING DANGERS IN THIS RESPECT AND MAY OPPOSE PURSUING A POLICY OF DETENTE FOR THIS VERY REASON. HOWEVER, IT I
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10. THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES' DECISION TO CEASE JAMMING OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE BROADCASTS OF THE BBC, VOICE OF AMERICA AND DEUTSCHE WELLE AS OF 9TH SEPTEMBER, THOUGH CERTAIN OTHER FOREIGN BROADCASTS ARE STILL BEING JAMMED, MAY BE INTERPRETED AS A GESTURE TO OFFSET THE ADVERSE EXTERNAL EFFECTS OF THE ANTI-DISSIDENCE CAMPAIGN. IT CAN ALSO BE SEEN, LIKE BREZHNEV'S SPEECH IN ALMA ATA ON 15TH AUGUST, AS AN ATTEMPT TO CREATE A LESS DEFENSIVE SOVIET POSTURE ON BASKET 3 AT THE CSCE. BUT IT MAY EQUALLY BE REMARKED THAT THE CESSATION OF JAMMING BEFORE DISCUSSION OF THESE ISSUES TO STAGE TWO OF THE CSCE SERVES AT THE SAME TIME TO PRESERVE THE SOVIETS' POSITION, IN ADVANCE OF THE TALKS, THAT TO JAM OR NOT TO JAM IS A PURELY DOMESTIC MATTER. HERE, AS IN OTHER FIELDS SUCH AS THE EMIGRATION OF SOVIET JEWS, THEY HAVE UNDERLINED THEIR ABILITY AND READINESS TO BLOW HOT AND COLD AS THEY MOMENTARILY SEE FIT.

11. AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT FREQUENTLY MENTIONED IN THE DISCUSSIONS IN THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE ATTENTION OF THE WESTERN PRESS AND PUBLIC OPINION HAS BEEN FOCUSED BY RECENT EVENTS ON THE ISSUE OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN THE SOVIET UNION. THIS COMES AT A TIME WHICH COINCIDES
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WITH THE FIRST REAL OPPORTUNITY FOR THE WEST TO PRESS FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CSCE.

12. ON THE OTHER SIDE THERE HAS BEEN AN UNUSUALLY VIRULENT CAMPAIGN OF PUBLIC DENUNCIATION AGAINST THE DISSIDENTS IN THE SOVIET PRESS. IF ONE REJECTS THE IDEA THAT THIS WAS MERELY AN EXAMPLE OF SOVIET HEAVY-HANDEDNESS WHEN CONFRONTED BY A SITUATION THAT MIGHT GET OUT OF CONTROL, THEN THE CAMPAIGN MAY BE INTERPRETED AS UNDERLINING RECENT CALLS FOR IDEOLOGICAL VIGILANCE AND AN ATTEMPT TO GAUGE HOW FAR THE SOVIET PUBLIC CAN BE MOBILIZED OVER SUCH ISSUES. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP, SENSING THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME PUBLIC EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR THE DISSIDENTS BY FELLOW INTELLECTUALS (WHICH DID IN FACT MATERIALIZE), MAY SIMPLY HAVE WANTED TO GET IN FIRST WITH THEIR DENUNCIATIONS AND JUSTIFICATION OF REPRESSION.

III. CONCLUSIONS

13. THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS APPEAR TO CONFIRM THE INTENTION

OF THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP TO PRESS AHEAD EXTERNALLY WITH A POLICY OF DETENTE TOWARD THE WEST WHILE MAINTAINING INTERNALLY AS TIGHT AN IDEOLOGICAL REIN AS POSSIBLE EVEN AT SOME RISK OF COMPROMISING THEIR EXTERNAL EFFORTS. A PARALLEL ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN "IDEOLOGICAL SYNCHRONISATION" AMONG THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE WARSAW PACT IS APPARENT IN THE RECENT SERIES OF BILATERAL IDEOLOGICAL TREATIES THAT HAVE BEEN CONCLUDED.

14. THE FACT THAT THE SOVIETS ARE PREPARED TO FACE UP TENACIOUSLY TO THE DILEMMA OF MAINTAINING TIGHT IDEOLOGICAL CONTROL WHILE SEEKING DETENTE IS AN INDICATION OF THE EXTENT OF THEIR INTEREST IN ACHIEVING AIMS SUCH AS CONSECRATION OF THE STATUS QUO IN EUROPE AND ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION WITH THE WEST. THIS WOULD SEEM TO POINT TO THE NEED FOR AT LEAST EQUAL TENACITY ON THE PART OF THE WEST IN ENSURING THAT WHATEVER GAINS THE SOVIETS MAY EXTRACT IN THE CSCE OR IN OTHER CONTEXTS IS BALANCED BY TANGIBLE PROGRESS IN FIELDS OF MOST INTEREST TO THE WEST, PARTICULARLY IN THE FREER EXCHANGE OF PEOPLE AND IDEAS. MORE GENERALLY, THE CONSEQUENCES BOTH FOR CSCE AND DETENTE AS A WHOLE OF THE COURSE TAKEN BY INTERNAL EVENTS IN THE SOVIET UNION WILL NEED CAREFUL WATCHING.

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15. THE COUNCIL MAY ITSELF WISH TO CONSIDER THE LONGER TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THIS SUBJECT IN MORE DETAIL; ALTERNATIVELY, IT MAY WISH TO CHARGE THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE WHICH FURTHER STUDY OF CERTAIN OF ITS ASPECTS OR DIRECT THAT THE EXPERT WORKING GROUP ON THE SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE GIVE SPECIAL ATTENTION TO IT AT ITS MEETING IN NOVEMBER.

END TEXT.

3. COMMENT: AS INDICATED IN PARA 15 OF ABOVE TEXT, CURRENT INTENTION IS TO SEND ABOVE REPORT TO THE COUNCIL FOR ITS INFORMATION. MISSION BELIEVES THAT BEST COURSE WOULD BE FOR COUNCIL TO NOTE REPORT AND DIRECT THAT EXPERT WORKING GROUP ON SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE GIVE PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THIS SUBJECT AT ITS MEETING IN NOVEMBER, AFTER WHICH POLITICAL COMMITTEE COULD, IF CIRCUMSTANCES INDICATE, RETURN TO SUBJECT.

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